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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR AND RELATED MATTERS

UNDP follow-up to General Assembly resolution 47/199

Report of the Administrator

I. PURPOSE

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with Governing Council decision 93/16 of 23 June 1993, in which the Council requested the Administrator to report at its forty-first session (1994) on progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992.

II. COUNTRY STRATEGY NOTE (Paragraphs 9, 39c and 39g)

2. UNDP contributed significantly to early discussions on the country strategy note (CSN) in the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) and other forums, and, in October 1993, participated in the first CSN workshop at the International Labour Organization (ILO) Turin Centre. The workshop made substantive contributions to the CSN guidance notes distributed by the United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) in March 1994.

3. As specified in paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 47/199, the preparation of a CSN should be undertaken in "all recipient countries where the Government so chooses ..." So far, 40 countries have formally expressed interest in the CSN; 12 have informally expressed interest; 42 have not yet decided; and 12 have deferred consideration of the CSN. Special socio-economic circumstances in 17 other countries have precluded consultations on the CSN within the country.

4. With the distribution of the guidance and explanatory notes on the CSN by DPCSD in March 1994, it is anticipated that more countries will opt to prepare one in the course of the year. A series of regional, subregional and national workshops will also be undertaken to assist in the preparation of the CSN. When possible, UNDP will make available, along with other United Nations development system partners, additional resources to facilitate the preparation of the CSNs.

III. HARMONIZATION OF PROGRAMMING CYCLES (Paragraph 10)

5. The process of harmonizing programming cycles within JCGP is being undertaken under the auspices of the JCGP Subgroup on Harmonization and, within this group, UNDP has responsibility for coordinating the effort in the Asia and Pacific countries.

6. Considerable progress has been made in harmonizing the programming cycles of UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the various programme countries. The process requires a willingness on the part of the agencies to shorten or lengthen current cycles in order to achieve harmonization. Where feasible, the cycles are being harmonized around national plans, budget cycles and strategies. So far, about 33 per cent of the programme cycles are harmonized. It is anticipated that by 1996, harmonization will be achieved in 80 per cent of the programme countries. Towards this end, the executive heads of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA issued a joint letter to programme countries in December 1993 providing guidelines on how to proceed with the harmonization of country programme cycles.

IV. PROGRAMME APPROACH (Paragraphs 12-14)

7. UNDP distributed its guiding principles on the programme approach in May 1993 and, to operationalize the principles, further developed the "Guidelines for Programme Support Document" which were distributed to the country offices in November 1993. The Programme Support Document is an operational tool outlining the national programme, the rationale for UNDP support, capacity-building targets and the UNDP financial parameters.

8. In a related development, the UNDP Central Evaluation Office produced two documents "Guidelines for Evaluators" (September 1993) and draft "Guidelines for Developing a Monitoring and Evaluation System in the Context of the Programme Approach" (November 1993) for use by country offices in developing, implementing and monitoring UNDP-supported programmes. It is expected that the monitoring guidelines will form part of the documentation to be presented to the Economic and Social Council on the establishment of system-wide measures of accountability at the country level.

9. Country experience with the programme approach remains limited since most of the operational tools were distributed only in late 1993. Mid-term review exercises undertaken in 1993 suggest that while most country programmes generally remain project-oriented, new proposals are increasingly being developed following the programme approach. The decline in indicative planning

figure (IPF) resources has, however, tended to limit the capacity of the country programmes to respond to new programming opportunities.

V. NATIONAL EXECUTION (Paragraphs 15-19, 21-23)

10. Following CCPOQ agreement on a common United Nations development system interpretation of the term "national execution" in March 1993, UNDP commenced work on reviewing its present guidelines on this modality. Revised guidelines, which simplify the adoption of the modality of national execution, without compromising accountability or increasing the administrative workload on the programme countries, are being developed and will be distributed to the country offices in 1994.

11. Feedback from the programme countries indicates that national execution of UNDP-assisted programmes is generally accepted as necessary to facilitate national ownership and management of the development process. In 1993, 40 per cent (or $411 million) of UNDP programme expenditure was through national execution, up from 23 per cent (or $233 million) in 1992. UNDP continues to support the use of this modality through, inter alia, its TSS-2 provisions, which facilitate substantive accountability and technical backstopping by the specialized agencies during implementation.

VI. DECENTRALIZATION (Paragraphs 24-27)

12. In its resolution 47/199, the General Assembly calls for the further decentralization of authority to the country offices to enhance coherence in programming and resource utilization, programme development and component approval. As noted by the Administrator in his report DP/1993/24, the Resident Representatives have been assigned increased authority over programme, personnel and administrative matters. In general, the financial level of project approval delegated to Resident Representatives is $1 million. Project approval between $1 million to $3 million by the Resident Representative is at the discretion of the regional bureau director. The Resident Representative may be delegated authority to approve individual components above $3 million in the context of programmes that have been cleared by the Programme Review Committee.

13. Further, in December 1993, UNDP adopted a 10-component decentralization package designed to balance increased operational authority with strengthened reporting and accountability mechanisms. Pilots of the full package will take place in 15 programme countries across all regions in the course of 1994.

VII. COMMON MANUAL (Paragraphs 29, 32-34)

14. UNDP has been active in the JCGP working group that is examining prospects for a United Nations system-wide common manual. The working group feels that owing to the present divergence in mandates, modus operandi, and, therefore, procedures among the agencies, it will not be possible to develop a conventional common manual as envisaged by General Assembly resolution 47/199.

15. The group, however, will proceed to identify and build a manual from elements on which there is system-wide agreement, such as the programme approach, national execution, the CSN, etc. The expectation is that the manual will grow as progress is made.

16. Towards the same end, UNDP has co-sponsored with UNFPA and UNICEF a study of accounting requirements for national execution with a view to reducing and even eliminating divergent practices. A larger multidonor study on aid management and accountability - in which UNDP is financing recipient country participation - has developed a generic aid-management and accountability framework, presently being tested in the United Republic of Tanzania and expected to be similarly customized, and implemented, in two other countries in the course of 1994.

VIII. RESIDENT COORDINATOR SYSTEM (Paragraphs 37-39)

17. UNDP attaches particular importance to the service function of the Resident Coordinator system. Recognizing this, UNDP has made a major commitment in time, money, infrastructure and other resources to the function, which has resulted in, among other things, closer UNDP collaboration with the United Nations Secretariat, both for humanitarian affairs and for peace-keeping and governance.

18. At the JCGP High-Level Meeting in Bangladesh in February 1994, UNDP made concrete proposals to strengthen country-level coordination and the function of Resident Coordinator. The proposals included such aspects as staffing for the coordination function, training for United Nations country teams, coordination information and the selection of Resident Coordinators from a wider pool of candidates.

19. Notably, the meeting approved a proposal on establishing country-specific vacancy pools and on the process for appointing Resident Coordinators, essentially in association with the UNDP annual reassignment exercise. Under the proposal, candidates for Resident Coordinator posts would be recommended by the JCGP Executive Heads and the Administrator would seek the comments of the Executive Heads before making a selection. The selected candidate(s) will be presented to the Secretary-General by the Administrator. Upon the agreement of the Secretary-General, the existing procedures for consultations with members of ACC and for obtaining clearance of the host Governments will be implemented by the United Nations.

20. It is anticipated that the broadening of the pool and the transparency in the selection process outlined above will have a positive effect on the Resident Coordinator system as a whole, including increasing the number of non-UNDP Resident Coordinators. Presently, at least 40 per cent of serving Resident Representatives have served in United Nations specialized agencies other than UNDP in their careers and five Resident Representatives have been appointed from the JCGP agencies since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/199 in 1992.

21. Additionally, UNDP continues to participate in a CCPOQ working group that is reviewing and updating the function of the Resident Coordinator in the light

of recent legislation. In this context, the pivotal role of the Resident Representative as Resident Coordinator was reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 48/209 and, in accordance with resolution 46/182, the Resident Coordinator will normally coordinate the humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system at the country level. Much effort will also go towards providing financial and substantive support and training to the function and to improve the monitoring of performance in the context of the new tasks.

IX. FIELD-LEVEL COMMITTEES (Paragraphs 40-41)

22. In its resolution 47/199, the General Assembly called upon Resident Coordinators to take the necessary steps to establish appropriate field-level coordination mechanisms to provide guidance and advice on inter-agency programme issues. Based on a recent survey by DPCSD, significant progress has been made by Resident Coordinators in establishing field-level coordinating mechanisms. Of the 128 countries with Resident Coordinators, 74 have established field-level coordinating mechanisms. In 45 of these countries, both a coordinating committee and the associated thematic subgroups have been established; in 19 countries there is a coordinating committee but no separate thematic groups; and in 10 countries there are thematic groups but no separate, formal coordinating committee. Special circumstances in 34 countries have precluded the establishment of coordination committees at the present time.

23. The nature and scope of coordination varies among the countries, ranging from attempts at substantive joint programming (e.g., around a poverty alleviation programme in China) to purely administrative coordination to avoid duplication of activities. The most common thematic focuses of the field-level committees, subgroups and periodic meetings including the CSN, human resources development, the environment, global conferences, HIV/AIDS, poverty alleviation and food security.

X. COMMON PREMISES (Paragraph 42)

24. At present, one third of the offices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), more than half of those of the United Nations Information Centres (UNIC), and approximately one fifth of those of UNICEF and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) share premises with UNDP. In the majority of cases the World Food Programme (WFP), UNFPA and UNIDO share premises with UNDP as well, while the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have tended to maintain separate offices.

25. At the JCGP High-Level Meeting in Bangladesh in February 1994, agreement was reached to establish an inter-agency unit to implement the United Nations system common premises (UNSCP) concept in the programme countries. The unit will be managed under the auspices of UNDP.

XI. COMMON TRAINING (Paragraphs 43-46)

26. In paragraphs 43-46 of its resolution 47/199, the General Assembly emphasized the importance of common, system-wide training programmes. Towards this end, UNDP has contributed to curriculum development and provided staff and financial resources to the ILO International Training Centre, Turin, for the training of United Nations country teams. So far, about 60 United Nations country teams have been trained at the Centre.

27. UNDP also continues to support the Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP) in conjunction with the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs. In 1993, DMTP conducted 15 workshops and provided training materials requested by institutions in over 100 countries.

28. Other collaborative training initiatives undertaken in various programme countries have covered such topics as HIV/AIDS, successor arrangements for agency support costs, the programme approach, national execution and country strategy notes.

XII. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REFORM (Paragraph 48)

29. The General Assembly recognized in its resolution 47/199 that the United Nations system has a role to play in assisting countries undergoing deep social and economic reform. Towards this end, UNDP has provided financial, material and logistical support in a number of countries undertaking electoral reforms, in close collaboration with the United Nations Electoral Assistance Unit (EAU). In April 1993, UNDP commissioned a study to review UNDP support in this area, with the view to identifying ways to enhance the effectiveness of UNDP and EAU responses to the increasing number of requests for support from electoral commissions, human rights organizations and legislatures in countries contemplating or undertaking reforms. The report has been widely shared with the international community and will be the basis for updating guidelines on the United Nations role in electoral assistance activities.

30. In addition, UNDP continues to support activities related to economic reform, public sector reform and private sector development through its regular country programmes as well as its Public Sector Management Group and the Division for the Private Sector in Development.

XIII. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (Paragraph 47)

31. In its decision 90/34, the Governing Council decided that during the fifth cycle (1992-1996), UNDP should focus on building and strengthening national capacity for human development in six areas. Towards this end, UNDP has sought to mainstream the human development concept and approach into its operational activities by developing guidelines and tools for human development operational activities and assisting country human development initiatives. Several countries have also received UNDP support in refining data collection, rethinking strategies and planning for human development as well as in such overarching issues as governance and macroeconomic reform. The majority of the

country programmes approved under the fifth cycle, as of June 1993, have the promotion of human development as the underlying theme and several countries working with UNDP country offices have allocated substantial resources to human development.

32. Since 1990, UNDP has published the Human Development Reports, which have contributed significantly to the international debate on development. The reports have defined human development in terms of broadening people's choices and have proposed a new measure for socio-economic progress: the human development index (HDI). The reports have also urged the restructuring of national and international aid budgets towards human development priorities and have highlighted the importance of people's democratic participation in the development process. The 1994 Human Development Report extends this tradition and discusses the new paradigm of sustainable human development (SHD), which entails merging the concept of sustainable development and that of human development. The report examines the key concepts of this paradigm and suggests practical measures towards SHD-oriented development.

XIV. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

33. The Board may wish to

Take note of the present report.